

**LARGE AREA LAND USE PLANNING  
FOR MANITOBA**

**VERSION 2  
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**Partial Text- Recommendations**

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# **Large Area Land Use Planning—Applications for Manitoba**

## **1. Introduction**

This paper advocates Large Area Land Use Planning in Manitoba as a necessary tool for fulfilling diverse societal objectives. It examines policy recommendations for Large Area Land Use Planning, Manitoba's various commitments to land use planning, characteristics of different models of land use planning (including First Nations traditional land use<sup>1</sup> studies), lessons useful to Manitoba from BC's experience with land use planning, and some suggestions regarding implementing Large Area Land Use Planning in Manitoba.

Large Area Land Use Planning would introduce certainty in land use in Manitoba. Through public and First Nations consultations, consensus and careful planning, a balance between environmental, economic, social, and traditional values could be achieved. Large Area Land Use Planning could provide the basis for providing First Nations certainty in decision making regarding their traditional lands.

Protected areas could increase and be secured for conserving biodiversity and maintaining ecological functions while providing economic opportunity. Large Area Land Use Planning involves zoning for sustainable resource development, thus providing communities, industries and workers greater security. Large Area Land Use Planning thus could provide the basis for decision making for Manitoba's land base.

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<sup>1</sup> Traditional land use are activities in ancestral lands that involve the harvesting of traditional resources, such as hunting, fishing, trapping, berry picking, or land use that has spiritual or cultural significance such as sacred sites, burial grounds, hunting areas.

## **Large Area Land Use Planning – Definition**

Land use planning takes place along a continuum that ranges from the general to the specific – from the global to the specific (Brown, 1992). At the provincial level, the upper end of the continuum is generally a provincial land use strategy that sets goals, policies and directions to the lower end, where progressively more detailed and operational plans are prepared for regions, sub-regions and local sites (see Appendix 1 for an example of this planning continuum). Brown (1992) calls the planning continuum a “top down and bottom up” planning model:

The idea of a planning continuum reflects the important and practical need for national, provincial or state governments to define basic land and resource policies in the broad public interest (the top down); and the equally important need for local people and governments to reflect local conditions and aspirations in planning and decision making (the bottom up) (pp.5).

There is an expectation—and often a legal requirement—that lower level plans should be consistent with higher level plans (Brown, 1992). For example, the Commission on Resources and Environment Act (1992, s. 4 [1]) of British Columbia requires the Commissioner to facilitate the development of “regional planning processes to define the uses to which areas of British Columbia may be put”. Again in British Columbia, legislation enables the preparation of “higher level” regional plans and “lower level” operational plans (Forest Practices Code of British Columbia Act, 1995) which are based on the regional land use plan.

This paper focuses on the top-end of the continuum of land use planning—that is at the provincial, and regional level. Planning at this level will be referred to as Large Area Land Use Planning in this paper.

Large Area Land Use Planning is defined as having the following characteristics (adapted from Brown, 1996):

- covering extensive geographical areas ( natural region, ecoregion, or large ecosystems)
- long term (at least 20 years)
- biophysical and ecological planning framework
- sound technical and scientific base
- participatory—civil society and First Nations fully involved, not government or industry driven
- meets a variety of societal objectives and values (including First Nations and traditional land use)
- not driven by single use, or by short-term economic gain
- sustains ecological functions and biodiversity
- focuses on land and resource allocation and strategies. These should be aligned with public policy goals, and meet existing commitments and responsibilities
- adequately staffed and supported
- public access to information about plans, and review
- all planning and pre-planning within a clear context or terms of reference

## **Recommendations and Future Directions**

These recommendations are clustered into five categories:

- Preparation for Large Area Land Use Planning
- The planning process
- Scientific and technical basis for Large Area Land Use Planning
- First Nations role and participation
- Implementation , monitoring and follow-up for effective Large Area Land Use Planning

### **Preparation for Large Area Land Use Planning – Recommendations**

- 1. Undertake research and planning prior to initiating large area land use planning prior to public planning.**
- 2. Establish a group of external and/or independent advisors and experts to assist in research and planning.**
- 3. Identify existing capacity in government and other organizations, and the steps to build capacity for large area land use planning.**
- 4. Identify the sets of research and the technical tools that will be needed for the different components of large area land use planning.**
- 5. Clearly establish the policy framework for planning exercise.**

### **The Process – Recommendations**

- 6. Establish an independent land use planning unit. Guarantee its independence by legislation.**
- 7. Establish Protocols to ensure equal voice for all participants and to ensure respect for all values and views.**
- 8. Provide participant funding so public interest and community voices are heard.**

- 9. Build in procedures to avoid conflicts of interests**
- 10. Ensure the planning process is open and transparent. Science and Technical Basis – Recommendations**
- 11. Use the concept of a planning continuum<sup>26</sup> starting with a provincial land use strategy or charter.**
- 12. Use natural biophysical boundaries rather than administrative boundaries for large area land use plans.**
- 13. Ensure terms of reference for planning exercises include all the values associated with the land.**
- 14. Use the latest available biophysical and scientific knowledge.**
- 15. Use the “precautionary principle” in planning.**
- 16. Continue protected areas establishment consistent with existing protected areas strategies, and protocols**
- 17. Provide local governments with a planning context to respond to resource management issues**
- 18. Take into account public policy, tenure, legal and traditional rights existing on the landscape.**

### **First Nations and Aboriginal Peoples<sup>28</sup> Participation - Recommendations**

- 19. First Nations should be equals with the province in planning for traditional lands access.**
- 20. Establish a framework agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding to guide First Nations participation and consultations.**
- 21. Recognize the special status of First Nations in the public participation process.**

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<sup>26</sup> See Appendix 1 for example of the planning continuum.

<sup>28</sup> These recommendations include all First Nations, Metis, and Aboriginal communities who may identify themselves as affected participants in Large Area Land Use Planning.

**22. Build First Nation capacity to engage in land use planning** Ensure the unique First Nations and Aboriginal perspective on land use and traditional knowledge is carefully considered and included. Include co-management arrangements between First Nations and the province in large area land use plans

**Implementation and Monitoring - Recommendations**

**23. Build in extensive civil society participation in plan implementation and monitoring. Subject all planning products and reports to public and external peer review** Future Directions

**24. Include co-management arrangements between First Nations and the province in large area land use plans.**

**25. Build in extensive civil society participation in plan implementation and monitoring.**

**26. Subject all planning products and reports to public and external peer review .**